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Wild Posies

By John Troland

New York City Oct. 24. 1915

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From The Author's Nephew,
James R. Ireland
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Wild Posies

BY

JOHN TROLAND

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To
My Dear Wife Rubie
and to all
Lovers of Nature
Everywhere
J. T.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Acknowledgment is here given to all periodicals in which any of the within verses originally appeared, especially to *The Youth's Companion,* The Frank A. Munsey Company, *Sunday School Times, Journal of Education, Presbyterian Banner, The Nautilus Magazine, The Catholic Transcript,* and *The Springfield Republican* for expressed courtesy in regard to reproducing the poems in book form.

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Below is an exact facsimile
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With timid hand, and yet more timorous heart,
These Posies Wild, from many a fond retreat,—
Were grouped and garlanded in simplest art,
Are laid, with homage, at the Muse's feet.

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I

WILD POSIES

WILD POSIES

From off the field of busy care
  Where love and labor jangled;
From moments pilfered here and there
  As life's odd skein untangled;
Some scattered thoughts that came by day,—
  Betimes when least expected,
As flowers are gathered by the way
  From sheltered nooks neglected;

From walks and talks 'mid scenes diverse,—
  Distasteful and delicious,
From desert ways, where thought lay scarce,
  And sources inauspicious;
From spots where other hands had wrought,
  By ridges tilled and seeded,
Some opened after-blooms are brought
  Of buds they left unheeded.

But whether culled from field or fen,
  Through by-ways unfrequented,
Off headland-crag, in silent glen,
  Or meadows, clover-scented,
They breathe the air of love and youth
  That blended with his tasking
Who sought for beauteous forms of truth
  Beneath earth's outer masking.

Gathered and garlanded in one,
  From sunnied spots and shaded,
They hold, in tints of summers gone,
  Some joys that have not faded;
And in their perfume, old yet new,—
  A zest to memory lending,—
Lurks the old lure of flowers that grew
  With only Nature's tending.

SPRING

THE signs portend that winter's work is done!
  The balm of spring is in the air today;
A misty breath is rising where the sun
  Sheds on the frosty earth his vernal ray.

Soon will the soil life's potency reveal,
  And wake her dormant tenants from their sleep;
Soon every root its latent power will feel,
  And through the sod the crocuses will creep.

The rising sap will permeate the vine,
  And flowers shall flourish where the drifts have lain,
The cowslip and the daffodil combine
  To make of earth a paradise again.

Surely, to reverent hearts, the power above
  May firmer faith with these renewals bring,
And stir us all to livelier deeds of love
  As we behold this miracle of spring.

MY COMRADE

Comrade of mine is he
Whose kindling eye will see
A blossom on the lea;

For whom the wild bird-song
Stifles the clamorous throng,
And heals a world of wrong.

With such I'd pluck a flower;
For such, entwine a bower;
On such, bestow love's dower!

But that man bodes me ill
Whose pulses feel no thrill
At the first daffodil;

Tuneless, who plods the dell,
Finding no mystic spell
Lodged in the lily's bell,

For such, no skies of blue,
No sunset's golden hue,
Nor dream that might come true.

BLIND GIRL TO A ROSE

I'VE heard them praise thy beauty, precious flower!
And though I cannot even tell thy hue,
Nor note thy grace, as, blooming in thy bower,
Each blushing petal tempts the morning dew;

Yet I can touch thee, and from this can tell
Some form most beautiful my lips doth press,
And read thy deeper secret in the smell,
Like incense, breathing back to my caress.

There is a world no darkness can obscure,
And voids more vast than outward sense may fill,
To the fond eyes of love, a test more sure,—
A beauty that to mind is visible!

ACHIEVEMENT

The path was lonely till one gladsome day
  A flower of loveliest presence met my gaze;
And Love said, "Grasp it!" but my Pride said
    "Nay!
  You must not pluck it till you find a vase."

Artists and chapmen favored my request,
  But Pride was finical as Love was strong;
At length, secured, what all pronounced the
    best,—
  The flower had faded: I was gone so long.

CONSOLATION

We sigh for days that are no more;
  We mourn the loss of passions dead;
We sing the threnodies of yore,
  And weep the tear of pleasures fled.

Yet o'er the pathways of today
  Some lingering roses still may lean,
And where our doleful footsteps stray
  Sweet flowers be springing, all unseen.

Alert, the ear may catch the trill
  Of bird-song caroled in the tree,
And voices from the air to fill
  The soul with present ecstasy.

Above the dreaming, did we hear
  The sterner tone of duty's call
To sympathy with things anear
  That wait our joyance more than all,—

Soon would we breathe the purer thought
  That sets the stagnant pulse amove,
And to our lifted hands, unsought,
  Will come the answering touch of love!

SOLACE IN SYMPATHY

A FRAGILE floweret by a wayside wall
  For long unnoticed and untended grew,
'Neath fronded ferns and lustier weeds and tall,
  That scantly shared a meed of sun or dew.

  But one who footed wearily that way,
With heart o'erborne with an unsolaced grief,
  Pitied the flower wherein sad semblance lay
Of his own fate, and, pitying, found relief.

BANE AND BALM

GIVE of your love, and lift the world with cheer
  Faint hearts, nigh famished, crave; you cannot wait
  To read life's lesson from the book of fate,
Nor solve eternity's enigmas here,—

Here in the daily strife 'twixt life and death,
  Where haggard Toil beneath the whip and goad
  Hath barely time between to shift her load,
Or catch the fragrance of the summer's breath.

Bear up! for in thy place another one,
  Less strong, perhaps, would sink in dire despair
  Beneath the burden thou hast strength to bear;
Then for that other let thy task be done,

And all the hurts that nathless give thee pain
  Will shape to blessings for thy future sent,
  And Hope, strong-handed, raise her monument
In every field whereon thy peace is slain.

To soothe the sob and stanch the stifled sigh,
  Some beauty bring to eyes that now can see;
  And hearts that now can throb with ecstasy
Will feel the thrill as of God's presence nigh.

Give of your love and lift the world with cheer
Some heart, nigh famished, near you craves.
Why wait
Your gift of flowers, that soon, alas! too late,
In vain you'll spread with sorrow on his bier?

LIFE'S RESPONSE

The flower that blushes in the glade
  Has kissed the sun a while;
The dewdrop sparkling on the blade
  Has caught the morning smile.

The brook that, laughing, leaps the ledge,
  Has quaffed the mountain spring;
The songster piping in the hedge
  Heaven's note is quavering.

The higher bends the low to bless;
  And gladdened by the gleam,
The lowlier thing in gratefulness
  Gives back the borrowed beam.

Then, moping heart, thy murmurs hush,
  And claim the sunshine thine;
With bird and brook and floweret's blush
  Express the life divine!

THE LAST WILD FLOWER

When other flowers have gone to seed,
  And leaves their dying tints assume,
Above the tallest brake and weed
  The aster waves its purple plume.

The wild rose blossomed for a while,
  Then shed its petals by the way;
The daisy doffed her dainty smile;
  The goldenrod has had its day.

But in the summer's closing hours,
  Unshielded and unkept by art,
From out this sepulcher of flowers
  We see the purple aster start.

Thus in the field of memory's gloom,
  Where died the earliest flowers of thought,
Some lovelier plant today may bloom
  To balm the losses Time hath wrought.

TO A DECEMBER DANDELION

At winter's verge, in golden glory decked,
  One dandelion, nestling in the sward,
Brought back today the glow of spring, and checked
  The brooding numbers of a cheerless bard.

Flower of the field! thy mission is to teach;
  You link the spring to come with springs that were,—
Nor blush untimely, since thou art of each
  The reminiscence and the harbinger!

And be it mine thy lesson to instil;
  Amid life's sunshine or its gathering gloom,
With some late charm to chase the winter's chill,
  And hold the summer with love's lingering bloom.

II

THE MUSE

THE MUSE

CHIDE not the bard who lifts a listful lay!
  'Tis not for pampering applause he sings.
Who courts the Muse and owns her gentle sway,
  Finds fullest guerdon in the task she brings!

She wakes to realty what only seems,
  Illumes the vista to the upward view,
And clusters, in the garden of his dreams,
  The tints that give to truth a lovelier hue.

She whispers to him in the crowded mart
  Where babel voices clash in clamor rude,
And in the silent wilderness her art
  Dispels the loneliness of solitude.

Hope, faint and baffled, ready to expire,
  She quickens with a vision, yet to be;
She bends and breathes across the languid lyre,
  And melts the discords into harmony.

Chide not the bard who lifts a listful lay!
  Were all his dreams to dark oblivion tost,
And hushed the echoing of his lute today,
  How much of comfort to the world were lost!

THE POET'S DOWER

A SONG

WHOSE verse will move the world for weal
  Must needs have something more than skill,
And his own heart the theme must feel
  Who other hearts would seek to thrill.

As when a harp, long silent, may
  Awake to voice, when once it hears,
In vibrant chords but struck to-day,
  Some cherished note of former years,—

So hearts that may have seemed for long
  Insensate to the touch of love,
Will echo back the poet's song
  From depths where hidden pulses move.

In silences too deep for art,
  Where yet no form of words hath wrought,
He sounds the key-note of his heart,
  And wakes the harmonies of thought.

MY DREAM

A GLINT of summits yet unscaled;
  A trail of treasure to be found;
A shimmering of seas unsailed;
  A skyward arch that strikes the ground:
    To read this dream, the most I ask
    Is fitness for my present task.

BUILDING

ALBE his place obscure and name unknown,
  He is an artist true who daily strives
To fashion in a temple of his own
  That beauty he would seek in other lives.

And though his hand one day must drop the
    task,
  With pillars carved and polished, but unset,
His work will stand secure, nor would we ask,
  Will not this temple be completed yet?

THE TRIO

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY

I

FAITH penetrates the darkest, deepest night,
  Yet with one hand at noonday screens her eyes.
To fend their vision from the dazzling light,
  And with the other reaches for the prize.

II

When torrid winds for long have swept the lea
  And dried the stretches of the arid plain,
Hope scans the sky and is the first to see
  The cloud premonishing the welcome rain.

III

The tenderness that balms the wounded heart
  Forbears resentment to the rude assault,
Nor yet condones, but kindly weighs that part
  Which looks redeeming in another's fault.

WEAVERS

Fond worker, thy completed job
  Fills well this corner of my room;
One nail, that picture-cord, a knob,
  Have served thy purpose for a loom.

The crafty net thus deftly spread
  Bespeaks the trained artificer;
From thine own substance drawn, each thread
  That forms the filmy gossamer.

Comrade, with thee, in tenuous thought,
  Some toilsome threads I stretched, and strove
To claim,— as warp and woof I brought,—
  A corner for the thing I wove.

But here some dusting-maid ere long
  Will come, regardless of thy care,
And spoil thy web,— and soon my song,
  Alas, an equal fate will share!

MY VISITOR

A BEAUTEOUS moth crept through my lattice frame,
And there, on wings all silver-tipped and bright,
He circles 'round my study lamp, whose flame
Had bade him welcome from the outer night.

But, see! next instant from the fatal blaze,
Dead and disfigured drops my evening guest;
By saddened thought impelled, I turn my gaze
As if some sense of guilt had swept my breast.

Frail thing! forsooth thy visit,— brief and late,—
Imports some moral on the world's gay strife;
In season, if I gather from thy fate
The lesson of a nobler aim in life.

If so, e'en then thy scorched and shapeless form,
Thus lifeless on my study table tost,
Will shape the future of a kindred worm
And prove a sacrifice not wholly lost.

THE POET'S TASK

Who weaves a verse or chants a cheerful lay
May deem it lost and think the effort vain
Till, all unsought, one gladdened heart some day
Repeats the verse or echoes back the strain.

THE LIGHT AND SONG OF LIFE

CHEER up, sweet soul of mine! The world is ours,
And we the world's. We are not here by chance!
Both time and task assigned, ours to enhance
And deck each duty done, with fadeless flowers!

The thought of life inspires us, and the breath
Of coming summers fills the ambient air.
Urgent we'll press to climb hope's radiant stair
And wake the vibrant pulse that fears not death!

Cleaving each cloud a ray of light I see;
Beyond are suns and systems unexplored;
Behind the will that gave me birth are stored
The forces that must bring His best to me.

And, farther on, the purer light appears;
The rapture of the universal song
Blends with my sense harmoniously, and wrong
Jars more discordant with advancing years.

MY EXPERIENCE

Some verse I wrote for sale;
'Twas not at all verbose,
A sober, artless, unwrought tale
With pointed moral at the close.

To such as dealt in rhyme
My gem I sent with care,
But back it came in one week's time,
There was "no market for such ware."

Forthwith (I must confess,
In something of a pout)
I robed my muse in thinner dress,
And turned the moral inside out;

It struck me that a joke,—
Though not so good by half,—
The critic's favor might provoke,
And make the "gentle reader" laugh.

The man of letters smiled;
His readers caught the jest;
And later,— when his cheque was filed,—
I, too, was smiling with the rest.

III

MANHOOD

MANHOOD

He stands the test where souls are tried,
  And truest honor finds,
Who conquers manfully the pride
  That rules in feebler minds;
Who seeks not rest in life's career,
  Nor yet beyond the grave;
Whose heaven is duty's noblest sphere,—
  Not that which idlers crave.

He covets not the lording's place,
  Nor vainly strives to scan
The Master's mind, but asks for grace
  To do the best he can;
His peace, not torpor of the soul,
  But harmony within,—
Renouncing self to reach the goal
  And triumph over sin.

Once on the plow his hand he lays,
  His eye ne'er backward turns;
Fortune he seeks in virtue's ways;
  Ill-bought success he spurns.
Looking his fellow in the face,
  He sees God's image there;
Whate'er may help to lift the race,
  His hand is quick to share.

Meekly he takes life's daily tasks
  As part of heaven's great plan;
This boon, aught else denied, he asks,—
  To be a manly man.
Angels attend on such an one,
  And stars their courses move
To light his pathway to the throne
And garnish it with love.

WHEN I HAVE TIME

You'll please excuse — at present —well! —
  I'm full of business, as you see,
I mean — but, then, the truth to tell,
  All this and more I've planned to be,—
    When I have time.

Such themes I'll study as will give
  To every thought an upward trend;
The ceaseless *care*, the senseless *drive*,
  All these I'll drop,— you may depend,—
    When I have time.

Those words of love I mean to speak,
  Will softly fall on welcome ears;
The broken-hearted and the weak
  Will bless my touch amid their tears,—
    When I have time.

To all I'll seem an angel sent
  To minister with lots of love;
Nor yet with this alone content,—
  I'll *seek* occasions to improve,—
    When I have time.

Beyond this life, what I shall do
  Or be, as yet I cannot tell;
But with respect to this, I, too,
  Will give some earnest thought as well,—
            When I have time.—

. . . . . .

Alas for *thoughts* yet earthward bent;
  For lonely *ears* that wait my call;
The *angel* lingers,— yet unsent;
  And *purpose*,— present — future — *all*,
            I drop with Time.

WORTH

THE rarest gem earth's bosom holds,
  Unpolished, half its worth conceals;
The lapidary's skill unfolds
  That hidden wealth nought else reveals.

So, too, it is that powers innate,
  Unwrought, must needs unnoticed stand,
As gems there are that only wait
  The touches of a master hand.

CRIPPLED

THAT man, alas! has lost a leg,
  Yet with a shining face
He moves alert upon his peg,
  With compensating grace!

But there goes one across the way
  Who needs compassion much;
He lost his faith in heaven one day,—
  For him there is no crutch.

NATURE'S NOBLEMAN

We judge him blindly, who unsought of those
  Who measure by the standards of the books,
Uncouth in guise, withal may yet disclose
  A wealth of thought unshadowed in his looks.

Unlearned,— not he who studies Nature's moods;
  Who bends attentive o'er an opening flower;
For whom the silent grandeur of the woods
  New rapture holds, and for his soul new power.

Who close to Nature holds a listening ear
  And on her pulse instinctive lays his hand,
Each day some lesson from her lips will hear,
  Her heart's deep throbbings feel, and understand.

For him the frailest thing,— a spider's thread,
  The humblest worm that upward bores the sod,
The very turf that yields beneath his tread,—
  Translates to simpler terms the mind of God.

He reads life's story in a faded flower,
  And in the remnant blush of tints that were
Sees withered hopes that blossomed for an hour,
  And marks the fate of earth's ambitions there.

The echoing glade, the patter of the rain,
  The soughing wind, the shadow of a tree,
Starts some new impulse in his active brain,
  And from each casement sets his fancy free.

Where outward gilding and the thin veneer
  Will find the recognition fashion gives,
He turns undaunted from the empty sneer,
  For in his soul the true refinement lives.

And though his forehead wears no earthly bay,
  Nor myrtle springs indulgent at his feet,
Heaven holds for him who nobly serves his day
  A truer tribute at its judgment seat.

BROTHERS

One thrust a coin into a pleading hand,
  Rushed on, all heedless of the beggar's care;
Millions of wealth he had at his command,
  And yet no time for blessing or for prayer.

So close of kin, as Heaven looked down that day!
  One doomed to want, and one to wealth a slave;
And which was poorer it were hard to say,—
  The hand receiving or the hand that gave.

CHARACTER

My inward self: not that which others see,
And, outward seeing, judge as good for
nought;
At best, perhaps, a pattern strangely wrought
Of forms diverse and tints that disagree; —
But what I am, the what I seek to be,
As imaged daily in my nurtured thought;
The goal of hope for all I've loved or sought
To fashion in the very soul of me.

This is my character; by this alone,—
Be judgment had in either earth or heaven,—
I stand or fall; and vain the epitaph
That spreads on molded scroll or chiseled stone
One virtue never on my soul engraven;
For truth abides,— all else is empty chaff.

TOUCHED

Today, at peace with all mankind,
  I left the precincts of my home,
Assured that happiness of mind
  Was mine for many hours to come.

While in that musing mood I basked,
  A stranger wrecked my reverie
Who, poorly clad, accosting, asked
  An alms most importuningly.

He held no claim upon my purse,
  Yet my refusal made him wince;
And though on me he breathed no curse,
  I've been unhappy ever since.

THE PERFECT MAN

In far-off lands beyond the seas
There lived a sage, Diogenes.
"Once on a time," the story ran,
He started out to find a man.

To aid him in the search he planned
He bore a lantern in his hand;
For though the sun and skies were bright,
He felt the need of added light.

His task was great, we must allow,
For men were then as scarce as now;
And till his quest discovered one,
Besides himself, he knew of none.

But how Diogenes came out
The story leaves us yet in doubt;
Or if he found the man he sought,
Or spent his oil and toil for naught.

His effort teaches, ne'ertheless,
A failing most of us possess;
Full half our lives we spend to find
A man proportioned to our mind.

Our standard is the final test;
By this we prove what's worst or best;
And with an artificial light
Determine 'twixt the wrong and right.

Thus in the mart and through the street
We pass as common whom we meet,
And bar them by the cynic's ban,—
Still searching for the perfect man.

THE TRAMP

Outcast and vagabond of earth!
Some mother knew thy hour of birth,
And braved its deepest pang for joy
That Heaven had given to her a boy.

STYLE

Not that which comes by culture or by art,
  Subjective to the dictates of a plan,
But that inborn, inseparable part
  Which moves apace, interpreting the man.

A PUDDLE IN THE ROAD

Over the road at princely pace
  A lordly coach rolled on;
The liveried driver in his place,
  With rich caparison.

Within, the haughty owner feels
  His stately temper fleered
Because one spatter from the wheels
  His coat of arms besmeared.

The puddle settled in the road,
  And in its face of sheen
A rustic,— passing with his load,—
  Of unobtrusive mien

Saw mirrored a new firmament,
  And through that earthly mask
A vision caught of heaven that lent
  New purpose to his task.

IV

TOIL'S MUSE

TOIL'S MUSE

Who has no mouths to feed, whose cares are light,
  Can gaze at sunrise and extol the noon,
Dream down the day's decline till nascent night
  Forespeaks the splendor of the rising moon.

Nursling of ease! for him the Orient gleams
  With charms his all-enamored muse detects,—
Skyward a-soar to tax the stars for themes
  And link in rhyme their varying dialects.

But he who toils in labor's gang the while
  Hears but the rhythm of the hammer's din,
The measured cadences of rasp and file
  That jar on deeper cadences within.

Whistle and bell alternate rend his head,
  Break off his slumber ere the dawn appears;
And through the jostling hours the cry for bread
  Shuts out from him the music of the spheres.

DRUDGERY

The work I sought not, nor the duty chose,
  And o'er the task reluctantly I bent;
Within my thought no sprightly visions rose,
  Nor chaste ambition to my labors lent.

Above were clouds I did not understand;
  Beyond, for me, no bright achievement stood;
I was the chisel in the workman's hand,
  Bearing the stroke, perceiving not his mood.

But one day, Love, in passing, came to me,
  By simple chance it was, I thought,— but lo!
He came to stay, and sweetly since have we
  Transformed the workshop to a studio.

PERCEPTION

If to the common task
  He adds no finer thought,
Why ought the worker ask
  That finer work be brought?

If in the plastic clay
  No prisoned shape be clear,
Why should the artist say,
  "My powers are hampered here"?

If the unchiseled rock
  Suggests to him but stone,
'Twere vain the marble block
  Be given to such an one.

Up from the schools of care
  Earth's greater souls have striven,
And proved their fitness there
  Till finer work was given.

For here's the final test,—
  That which the morrow brings;
And he who does his best
  Will rise to nobler things.

And tardy though it be,
  The prize must come to them
Who in the pebble see
  The luster of the gem.

SUCCESS

'Tis not in birth — its time or place,—
  To bar the power that waits on hope;
He wins who runs the strenuous race
  Regardless of his horoscope.

The tested truth, the honored aim,
  Will mark the progress of his way,—
Not boasted rank nor bolstered claim
  That trembles for the judgment day.

Environment may lend a touch
  To round some angles of the plan,
But for the finished work there's much
  Within the compass of the man.

And though the age may spell success
  In letters foreign to his skill,
He'll reach his crowning, ne'ertheless,
  Where character is regnant still.

VAE VICTIS!

THREE troubles wreck the lives of some
  And corrugate the brow,
The trouble past, the one to come,
  And that they suffer now.

Before them hangs the mantling cloud
  That hides the future field;
Behind them stalks the ghostly crowd
  From sepulchers unsealed.

Their present holds a glittering sword
  Suspended overhead;
A trivial touch — a breath — a word
  Will snap the slender thread.

Of such, surrendering ere they fell,
  Shall we say aught amiss?
Perchance we had not fought so well
  Against such odds as this.

TEXTURE

Two weavers I espied
  Within the selfsame room,
Where each one deftly plied
  A shuttle thwart his loom.

And watching there a while
  Each visage as they wove,
One blent a pleasing smile
  With every thread he drove.

The other sourly wore
  A sombrous featured mask;
The threads his shuttle bore
  Bespoke the tedious task.

When to the market place
  Shall come the webs of both,
Will his of shining face
  Not prove the richer cloth?

DUTY

To the day's task my strength is bent,
Be it a hard or pleasing one;
But, if the work be Heaven-sent,
Then Duty says, "This must be done!"

THE HAND

The hand, the plow to grip;
  The hand to wear the ring;
The hand to touch the lip,
  The hand to strike the string;

The hand, the faith to plight;
  The hand to wield the rod;
The hand to grasp the sword for right;
  The hand to lift to God;

The hand to welcome friends;
  The hand, adieus to wave;
The hand, when all that's earthly ends,
  To bear us to the grave;

The hand — nail pierced — on high,
  That beckons us to rest,
The hand that brought salvation nigh,
  The dearest and the best.

THE TYRANNY OF WEALTH

Oh, give us pause from all this carking care,—
  This heaping treasure for the days to come!
Pray let us have contentment where we are,
  And time for pleasure in our present home!

The miser lives, but barely feeds himself,
  To count and gloat o'er ducats on his knees;
But dead,— how mean that portion of his pelf
  Will be expended for his obsequies!

The financier exerts his utmost strength
  To reap from ventures made in mine and mill;
Barters his peace for gain, the which, at length,
  His heirs will scatter to contest his will.

Yon honest toiler at his frugal meal,—
  Blest in the love that wife and children share,
In humbler sphere affords the commonweal
  A better service than the millionaire.

He walks the treadmill,— yet a happier slave,
  Quit of the torture for the time to be;
Thrice blesséd in the gifts his Maker gave,
  He lives in hope his fairer home to see.

A CONTRAST

The poor man eats his frugal fare
  And lifts to Heaven his thanks;
The rich man dines on dishes rare
  And puts his trust in banks.

We mark the meek man's meagre store
  And note the proud man's roast,
But scarce know which we envy more
  Or which to pity most.

THE RECLUSE

Pious he lived, and prayed, and slept,
  Within his cavern cell,
And closed within his bosom kept
  The secret of his spell.

But others delved, and dug the ditch,
  With scantier space for thought;
And who so wise to tell us which
  Heaven's nobler purpose wrought?

I'VE FOUND MY WORK

"Blessed is the man who has found his work."
—Carlyle.

I'VE found my work; with pleasure I fulfil
The needed task proportioned to my power;
With modest pride I note the quickened skill
My product shows with every added hour.

I've found my work; I ask no greater gift
Than that which brings possession to my soul,
Strength to my arm when there is need to lift,
And animating hope to reach the goal.

I've found my work; and Nature,—ever kind,—
Her harvest gives, responsive to my toil;
And frequent flowers beside the paths I find,
Without my culture, springing from the soil.

I've found my work; yet am not free from care,
All have their ills, and every one his goad.
Why should I shrink the fate which others share,
Or tread untired life's long and dusty road?

I've found my work; I while the hours with
song;
And one there is who, side by side with me,
Speaks words of love and courage that are
strong
To buttress faith and solve life's mystery.

I've found my work; let idlers have their gold
And waste the hours in luxury and ease,
I choose the part wherein my powers unfold,—
My Maker works, and Him I seek to please!

PAY-DAY

THOUGH Christmas is a day for cheer,
  And likewise also May-day,
Of all the days that crown the year
  The best one is the pay-day!

THE GIFT OF SONG

Blest is he, be he lord or slave,
  When cares and duties throng,
To whom indulgent Nature gave
  The gracious gift of song.

A snatch of verse! but lo, it yields
  A balm for labor's scathe
That cheers the farmer in his fields,
  The toiler at his lathe.

A simple strain steals in anon
  Amid the weaver's stress,
And whispers from the years agone
  A thread of happiness.

Who to the task repugnant kneels
  Has conquered half the wrong
When with the rumble of the wheels
  He blends the worker's song.

His heart-beat, answering to the touch
  Of Music's potent spell,
His hand can compass twice as much
  And do it twice as well.

V

DAYS

DAYS

Days of joy and days of sadness,
  Days of hope and days of fear,
Days of longing, days of gladness,
  Fill the measure of the year.

NOVEMBER

The sun displays a pallid disk;
  The wind disturbs the stately pines;
The withered leaves, unrefuged, whisk
  And whirl around the straggling vines.

The trees are dead; the songsters fled
  That trilled the choruses of May;
No blithesome note,—belike, instead,
  The yawp of some belated jay.

Gone are the flowers that decked the dell
  And nodded in the summer's breath;
Sadly each stricken petal fell
  And wept its perfume out in death.

But through the bleak November blight
  That deadens every lovely thing,
Faith reads in a serener light
  The hidden prophecy of spring.

THANKSGIVING DAY

When over our heads hangs the drear of November,
And close to the ingle we shrink from the cold;
When May seems a myth, and the sweets of September
Have slipped from our ken like a tale that's been told;

'Tis then that we welcome the day of Thanksgiving,
And haste far and near to encircle the board
Where, slackened a while from the toiling and striving,
The nerves softly thrill to a bountiful chord.

And joyous the day, though tempestuous the weather;
The cold cannot vie with the log on the hearth.
Old Boreas may bluster; we care not a feather,
For home sheds a comfort, the warmest on earth.

Each household utensil seems instinct with reason;
And some, from a twelvemonth's repose on the shelf,
Come down with new pride to assist in this season
And share in the musical clatter of delf.

When ripe from the oven the turkey comes steaming,
With rich autumn hue that the housewife knows well,
She nods her approval with countenance beaming,
That fills all the feast with a magical spell.

And then come the mince pies, the tarts, and the pickles,
The cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes,—in fine,
Whatever of produce the appetite tickles,
Turned up from the furrow or culled from the vine.

All seated, forsooth too impatiently longing
The "grace," fitly worded, in silence to hear,
While upward a myriad of vapors are thronging,
We join in the "Amen" with hearts most sincere.

Ha! then comes the feeling that life is worth living,—
Forgotten the heartaches, the toils in the sun,—
For once in the year, on this Day of Thanksgiving,
We taste all the joys of the seasons in one.

Long, long may this festival gladden our nation!
And long may we cherish the blessing that comes
In favored response to the grateful oblation
That springs in our hearts and ascends from our homes!

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Lord, let my heart's thanksgiving be to Thee
  A prayer as well,— a prayer that prompts to deeds,
To deeds for which my thanks, if men shall see,
  Will prove me conscious of my deeper needs.

Lest at my board with sumptuous dainties spread
  I might forget the want that others feel,
Grant me his meekness, who with reverend head,
  Asks for Thy blessing on his scantier meal.

If smiling harvests crown the fields I've sown,
  The soil, the sunshine, and the seed were Thine;
What use, my toils, had not Thy Spirit blown
  Across the acres with a breath divine?

Whatever fields my hand essays to till,
  Much more my heart thy culture must require,
And grace, to supplement the feeble will,
  That ripens purpose out of faint desire.

But where my heart too oft Thy tillage spurned,
And shrank the Springtime entering of Thy share,
There, fallow and unbroken and unturned,
The ridges show small handfuls for thy care.

Yet ill befits this day for vain regret;
Nor tears nor penance can the past dissolve;
The future's mine; let me the past forget,
And crown the present with the new resolve.

Thus in my life thy goodness may be seen,
And in my thanks the kindlier deed appear,—
The Spirit's fruit, where only leaves have been;
Not one day's thanks, but thanks through all the year.

DECEMBER

The dew lies frozen on the shrunken sward;
  The path is hidden in the leaf-strewn lawn;
The stilted trees, like sentinels on guard,
  Spread their bare arms to greet the cheerless dawn.

The moorland, bristling in its coat of heath,
  Accents the brook that wanders o'er the plains;
The minstrel horde has fled the Winter's breath,
  And in the glade a lonely silence reigns.

Thus o'er Life's pride Death's mantling shadows fall,
  And seeming blight is traced on everything,—
Earth's verdure, flower, fruit, cheering song, and all
  Save Hope, that, clinging, waits the coming Spring.

CHRISTMASTIDE

Again sweet Christmastide
  Rings out from tower and dome;
And gathering at the cradle's side,
  Ancient of Days, we come!

Here sage and shepherd meet;
  The heirs of wealth and state
And poverty, with unshod feet,—
  The lowly and the great.

Out of the common night
  That hides our race in sin,
We turn to seek His gracious light
  Whose birthday proves us kin.

Where priest and prophet failed,
  And truth lay hid from kings,
To us, life's potency, unveiled,
  Is in the birth of things.

And seeking souls who pray
  The virtue of His touch,
Must come to Him as babes today,—
  His kingdom is of such.

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

Now that the year unto its close is rounding
  We feel the pulse of one fraternal strain,
And mingling hearts, like Christmas bells re-
    sounding,
  Renew the story of His birth again.

So may His life, whose lowly birth and passion
  Hath blent the sympathies of Heaven and
    earth,
Reshape our lives to that diviner fashion
  And re-beget us to a nobler birth.

THE MILLENNIUM

WHY wait a thousand years, — or one,
  To compass that for which we pray?
Let love through every action run,
  And Heaven is with us here, today!

A LENTEN THOUGHT

On the church's dome when the cross I see,
  As breathing a prayer I pause,
Is the Christ to me the Christ He should be
  Or only the Christ that was?

At the altar rail, when my head I bow
  In penance for broken laws,
Does my faith avow Him my Saviour now
  Or only the One that was?

When I feel the weight of a pressing grief,
  Or plead for another's cause,
Do I beg relief while with unbelief
  I deem Him but Christ that was?

Nay; surely the Christ is alive today!
  I'll trust in the power He has,
While my head I lay on His breast, and pray
  To Jesus, who Is and Was.

AN EASTER THOUGHT

"Jesus wept." LUKE 11:35.

WHO with the weeping sisters wept
  And called their dead to life again,
Himself in death's embrace hath slept
  And in the grave Himself hath lain.

But brief that rest, and when He 'woke,
  Man's latest foe was backward hurled,
And radiant on our vision broke
  The entrance to a brighter world!

Then need I care beneath what sky,—
  What day or night,— He calls for me;
Nor with what hand He leads me by,
  If I but know that it is He?

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

1659 AN ODE 1909

(Tune *America*)

"Two hundred fifty years!"
O! give three lusty cheers,
With hearts aglow!
Rejoice with trumpet sound
That on this favored ground
A home our fathers found
So long ago!

Right proudly may we raise
Glad anthems in their praise
Whose hopeful toil
In days of direful stress
Subdued the wilderness,
Planted and reared success
From doubtful soil.

If we of later race
Would fill with equal grace
This riper age,
Our hearts must stoutly aim
To build a virtuous name,
With steadfast lives to claim
Our heritage.

While fanfares fill our ears
We reck not what the years
May have in store;
But when our plaudits cease,
Long may the arts of peace
Our City's fame increase
Yet more and more!

1699 PLAINFIELD, CONNECTICUT 1899

Two hundred years! What queries, starting hence,
Traverse the bound where memory's verge grows dim;
As when, betimes, from some proud eminence
The eye would pierce beyond horizon's rim!

What vision comes to us from that dim age?
What answering message from that pilgrim band? —
We read not all of it from history's page,—
Behold it in the works they wrought and planned!

Here came they,— not as prowling victors come,
A fabled El Dorado's wealth to find,
But, loving freedom, here to found a home
And gain the greater conquests of the mind.

Not flowering meads, with fruits on every side
That pampered ease might paint or fain possess,
Oped on their gaze, but tarn and forest wide,
With rock-strewn vistas in a wilderness,—

A wilderness wherein no manna fell
  At prophet's word, nor bright schecinah's flame
Flashed on the way; but in their hearts full well
  They knew the Hand that led them was the same.

Anon the forest yielded to their toil;
  The rocky hillsides and primeval mould
Beneath their stroke became productive soil,
  And flowed with milk and honey as of old.

Prodigious powers evolved from frugal fare!
  Those stalwart sires and sons,— well-nourished, all,—
Ready with axe to lay a forest bare,
  Or quick to muster at the country's call.

Matrons and maids whose virtues stood the test
  Throve 'mid the hardships of that ruder time,
Endured the stress of new-made homes, and blest
  Them with the comforts of a faith sublime.

It meets not that a race new-born, new-bred,
  That reaps the vantage over which *they* toiled,
Withholding praise, should toss its loftier head,
  Or grasp reluctant with its hand unsoiled.

Nay, nay! with deeper pride, from hearts elate,
  Full tribute to the past we yield, and pray
Such grace be shed forever on our state
  As made old Plainfield what it is today!

DEPARTURE

The day, a-weary, softly sinks to rest;
The setting sun has kissed the clouds "good-night";
A purpling blush o'erspreads the glowing west;
And stars peer, timid, through the fading light.

So fain my soul would hear earth's last "good-by,"
With thoughts serene as closing tints of even
Which, ere they fade forever from the sky,
Blend softly with the coming lights of heaven.

VI

A VISIT TO THE SEA

A VISIT TO THE SEA

THERE is something most refreshing in a visit to
the sea,
That unlocks imprisoned fancy and that sets
the spirit free,
That gathers up the cares of life and sweeps
them all away,
Bedazzled in the sparkle of an evanescent
spray.

There's a something sympathetic in the swell-
ing of the tide
That enriches one's conception of a kingdom
free and wide;
And there's magic in the stillness that succeeds
the measured roar
When the emerald-crested breaker spends its
fury on the shore.

You may list' the sacred concert with its voices
by the score;
You may wake the mighty organ, with a thou-
sand stops, or more;
You may link the world's performers in one
loud harmonic strain;
But you cannot catch the cadence of Old
Ocean's grand refrain.

There's a fund of entertainment in each pebble
and each shell,
And a flavor appetizing to the very sense of
smell;
For to me, than breath of roses, there's a per-
fume far more sweet
From the sprayed and tangled sea-weed flung in
garlands at my feet.

There's a retrospective-blending with a future
"bye-and-bye,"
And a mist that kindly mixes with the moisture
of the eye
When there comes that tender feeling of a
Power that seems to be
In the rushing, and the gushing, and the hushing
of the sea.

AT WATCH HILL

I STOOD beside the ocean yesterday!
  The sun was bright; both sea and sky were fair;
The dim horizon looked long leagues away,
  And passing ships as if they swung in air.

Above the crag arose the lighthouse tower
  Around whose base the waters seethed and boiled,
As, fain to scale its sides by added power,
  Back from the cliff the tireless tides recoiled.

Recurrent waves the weed-robed rocks obscured;
  Their saline fringes swayed with every swell;
And gurgling lullabies my fancy lured
  To dreams fantastic, such as poets tell.

Well up the slope, upon a neck of land
  Where only winter's wildest footsteps stray,
A hapless hull,— half-hidden in the sand,—
  With battered stem and stern, dismantled lay.

That stranded bark, methought, with battered prow,
  Once proudly plowed the crested main, and bore
Her wealth of freight from port to port, but now
  Full prone she lies, a helpless hulk on shore.

Some strain of wind, perhaps, or stress of tide;
  Some error slight at compass, chart, or wheel;
Some small neglect; some signal undescried;
  And swift disaster smote her stalwart keel.

So, too, on life's expanse may human craft,
  'Mid favoring gales and sights that charm the soul,
With freighted hopes and swelling canvas waft,
  Yet near the lighthouse strike the hidden shoal,—

Some small divergence from the path of right;
  Some thoughtless venture where temptations lay;
Then borne by tides too strong for mortal might,
  On leeward sands, a helpless castaway.

Oh be it ours,— if fair or foul winds play,—
  To trust His care who knows life's currents best!
With careful soundings, taken day by day,
  To reach, unharmed, the peaceful port of rest.

A SEASIDE IDYL

Across the beach with thoughtless hand
  The maiden traced her name;
  Forthwith a sparkling wavelet came
And kissed it from the sand.

Emboldened by a hint like this,
  Upon the moment's spur,
  My name instead I offered her,
And wrote it with a kiss.

Since then the waves have come and gone,
  Yet, fonder, side by side
  We pace the beach of life's swift tide,—
No longer two, but one.

THE HERMIT CRAB

Twisted in shape, conformed to fit that shell
Which ill conditioned seems for thine abode,—
In fact, appears an awkward cumbrous load
To have and hold,— yet thou dost manage well
To make that cast-off thing thy citadel;
To move and counter-move in dexterous mode,
With graceful curvatures that wake and goad
My dormant fancy in its chambered cell.

Is there not scope for one in my cramped space
To practice purpose and perfect design?
Must task and load diminish or defer
The hope to garnish e'en the emptiest place
With all that wealth of love and deed benign
Which good men recognize as character?

THE SEA SHELL

Is it some rapturous mystery
  That sympathetic souls might guess,
Or echoings from thy native sea,
  These mezzo-murmurings express?

Not all our wise interpretings,
  Nor skilled conchologists may tell
What tale unfathomable rings
  Unceasingly within thy shell!

THE BEACON

As o'er the deep throughout the darkling night,
  From trackless distances the beacon throws,
In measured glints, its welcome guiding light
  To the trained eye that well the signal
    knows,—

So, when on stormy nights to trembling Doubt
  Life's voyage dark and cheerless seems to be,
Faith's eye,— well trained to distant light,—
    looks out
  Unswerving toward the port beyond the sea.

SHIPS

No ship by chance the harbor finds,
  But well her course must steer,
And trim her sails to catch the winds
  Whichever way they veer.

Out from the mast, when winds are fair,
  Her canvas wide she'll fling,
And gaily as a thing of air
  Go skimming, wing and wing.

But when fierce head-winds strike her track,
  And threaten with delay,
She lays to port or starboard tack,
  And onward beats her way.

And ships there be of human kind
  That well their course must know,
And carry sail to catch the wind
  However it may blow.

When fair the wind, from every mast
  Their bulging sails will sweep;
And joyful, daily speeding fast,
  Go dancing o'er the deep.

But when betimes some angry gale
  Breaks headlong on the path,
And rending threatens every sail
  That dares the tempest's wrath,

Then must they tack to catch the wind,—
  Though hard the task may be
To gain much headway, and to find
  The port beyond life's sea.

685699

THE ANCHOR

Clasped to her breast, as if with conscious pride,
Yon vessel bears the anchor's bulk today;
But should tomorrow's tempest lash the tide,
And leeward headlands chafe in angry spray,
Quick into fathoms deep she lets it slip,
And trusts for safety to its iron grip.

So hope, that gives assurance to the breast,
Is held for service there, and not for show
On tranquil seas, but waits the deeper test
Of troubled surge when wintry tempests blow.
That soul, unawed, outweathers every gale
Whose anchor reaches that within the vail.

THE RUDDER

BENEATH, unseen, where currents heave and sweep,
'Mid strain and stress unyielding night nor day,
One rudder guides the vessel through the deep
And holds her steady to her destined way.

So in our hearts, impulses deep and strong,—
That unrestrained would sway us oft aside,—
Resisted, serve to bear the soul along
'Mid strain and stress, if conscience be the guide.

To this obedient let the wheelsman steer,
Though storm-prest canvas bends the yielding mast;
The Pilot's voice above the tempest hear;
And end life's voyage in the haven at last.

WAITING THE TIDE

Close moored, aport, as merchant ships may stay
  Beyond their sailing hour to catch, at even,
Some tide to start them safer on their way,
  And bring them earlier to the destined haven;

So now, though bound to earth-born things, I wait
  Life's lingering tide, slow gathering to the flood.
'Tis well,— lest, rashly venturing through the strait
  To seas untried, I miss my way to God.

THE COMPASS

A THING so fragile that one feather's weight
  Might break its poise or turn the point aside,
The mightiest vessel, with her tons of freight,
  O'er pathless seas from port to port will
    guide.

What wonder, then, if lodged within the breast,
  Some simple, yet unwavering faith may lie
To guide the laden soul to ports of rest
  And, like the compass, point it to the sky?

LES VOYAGEURS

In life's grey morn, with vessels staunch,
  Their pennants floating on the wind,
And hope's full cargo, forth they launch,
  The port of happiness to find.
With eager prow they bend the chase
  Athwart the ocean's glittering sheen,
Heedless that, mirrored in its face,
  The overhanging cloud is seen.

And other ships that stand off wide,
  In fancy's vision but combine
To form a picture as they glide
  Toward the dim horizon line,—
For none of all that gallant fleet
  Have sailed the voyage once before;
All outward-bound, and none they meet
  Returning from the other shore.

If in their wake they dim descry
  Some vessel spoke at early dawn,—
Still some, more favored, scudding by,
  Have out of sight their course withdrawn.
What reck they,— while their tackling holds,—
  Though other craft have idle sail
That hugs the mast in languid folds,
  If they but catch the favoring gale?

Thus all life's day, till twilight come,
  And night draws on its closing shade
To find them then far, far from home,
  With only half the voyage made.
Kind Heaven! vouchsafe, in such a strait,—
  Lest in the night the bark may strand,—
The Trusty Pilot there shall wait
  To guide them to the better land.

AT SEA

As passing ships each other gladly hail,—
  A brief salute, then, signaling "Good-by!"
Fade into distant images of sail,
  And soon to specks fast swallowed in the sky —

So friends will meet and on each other smile;
  Passing full-sail, but steering by one pole,
They wave adieus, and memory lags a while;
  Then drear oblivion swallows up the whole.

This all? — when nightfall shuts our vessel in,
  A bootless voyage on a boisterous tide? —
To sink unseen, with shattered ties of kin,
  Like scattered wreckage, floating by our side?

Surely, to trustful souls, beyond this night
  That shadows friendship's sweet remembrances,
Some welcome harbor waits the morning light,
  Where slumbering Hope awakes to Love's caress.

WHEN OUR SHIP COMES IN

"When our ship comes in,"
Thus mother would say,
As, weeping, I begged the new toy.
"When our ship comes in
Some fine summer day;
Wait, Johnnie, and be a good boy!"

Hope, bird-like, on wing
Soared higher that day
As I turned from her kiss to my sport,
But early in spring
They bore her away
Ere our ship had come into port.

The years sadly roll,
And the ship delays,
But I patiently wait for the toy,
For deep in my soul
Speaks an echo which says,
"Wait, Johnnie, and be a good boy!"

Thus, late on life's shore
I linger and gaze,
Still scanning the sea and the sky;
And long more and more,
As I peer through the haze,
For the ship that *will* come by and by.

MY DESTINY

Life's sunny day now nears the dark,
  And here at eve beside the quay
I lodge, and wait the coming bark
  That soon will bear me out to sea.

The morning opened fair and bright,
  The gathering clouds of care were few,
And hope beamed with a lustrous light
  On objects still remote from view.

As mid-day brought the bustling hours,
  I shared the labors of the strong;
Turning betimes, amid the flowers,
  To ease the burden with a song.

Where Folly's truncheon ruled the day,
  Ere feeble self were quite o'erthrown,
The path seemed turned to Wisdom's way
  By some sweet spirit not my own.

If in the heated race for gain
  I missed the prize Ambition flings,
Her devotees, yet in the main
  I've had my share of lovelier things.

But scenes that soothe, or cares that cark,—
  Life now its all hath wrought for me.
It nears the dark, and — here's my bark!
  I go to find my destiny.

WRECK OF THE MAINE

PEACEFUL she lay, swaying light on her cable;
  Soft toyed the wind with the smoke from her pipes;
Fathoms below stretched her hull, staunch and stable;
  Proud from her peak waved the stars and the stripes.

Out from the face of the harbor reflecting,
  Light answers light, springing up here and there;
Night draws her curtain o'er heads unsuspecting
  No danger presaging in ocean or air.

Piped to his hammock,— for duty is over,—
  Rests the brave seaman on board of the *Maine*,
Dreaming of childhood, of home, or of lover,—
  God guard the sleeper who wakes not again!

Bursts on the stillness a crash and a shudder,
  Flash as of thunderbolt, rending of steel;
Trembles the monarch from stemson to rudder,
  Turret and magazine, stanchion and keel.

Lurid the flare from the bombs wildly flying,
  Shapes, more like spectres than men, dimly seen;
Down — bleeding — down go the living, the dying,—
  Down in the deep with our proud navy's queen.

Not in the smoke and the din of the battle;
  Not from the stroke of a foe in the strife;
But with the armor-plates' wrenching and rattle,
  Torn and dismembered, yet quivering with life.

Who can be witness without some misgiving?
  Where rests the blame for the brave that are gone?
Clasp ye the standard more firmly, the living! —
  If for their blood other blood must atone.

Calmly secure, with attention unflagging;
  Curbing the word that might spring from her mouth;
Strong in her millions; nor boasting nor bragging;
  Columbia keeps watch at the gates of the South.

VII

ON THE FARM

ON THE FARM

To till the soil
And reap its yield,—
To man this task was given;
Heaven blest his toil
In farm and field,
Although from Eden driven.

The farm, the farm! back to the farm!
Back to the primal state!
Back to the brooks, the flowers, and the charm
That lingers by Eden's gate!

VACATION TIME ON THE FARM

We may have little leisure on our hands;
  We may not journey far to east or west
To mark the wonders found in foreign lands,
  In flowering vale or towering mountain's crest;
We may not have the needed wealth or power
  To test the benefits of every zone;
We may not know the name of every flower,
  Nor yet the worth of every precious stone;

But we can dally o'er the dear old farm,
  And note the daisies blooming at their will,
Breathe the free air of home, and catch the charm
  Of glorious sunsets from the well-known hill.

We may not tingle with the ravishment
  Of freighted airs ambrosial that sigh
Through palmy vistas in the Orient,
  Which seem enchanted pathways to the sky;
We may not gaze on mosque and minaret,
  Lifting their gilded surfaces in air;
Nor start when from the dizzying parapet
  The grave muezzin gives the call to prayer;

But we can loiter on the meadow's edge,
  And scent the odors of the new-mown hay,
And list the robin carol in the hedge,
  Lifting sincere to heaven his roundelay.

We may not make the continental tour,
  Nor visit cities off beyond the sea,
Join with the picnic parties on the moor,
  Or watch the golfers on the highland lea,
Nor view basilicas of varied types,
  With dome and buttress climbing pile on
    pile,
Nor hear the organ with a thousand pipes
  Sending its anthems pealing down the aisle;

But we can catch the brooklet's music near,
  The raindrops' rhythmic patter on the sod,—
E'en in the thunders of the tempest hear
  The voice of Nature and the voice of God.

THE OLD-TIME COUNTRY SCHOOLHOUSE

Oh, the old-time country schoolhouse! I remember where it stood —
Near the crossroads; just a little to the right
As you reached the laurel pasture; then, emerging from the wood,
Came the ancient seat of learning into sight.

It was not so fine a structure as the city architect
With the genius of an artist might contrive;
'Neath its outlines,— far from classic,— one today would not expect
Any knowledge of the sciences to thrive.

Yet from that old country schoolhouse, with its chimney out of plumb,
And the gable ends and cornice slight askew,
Came the *boys* before whose wisdom more pretentious *men* were dumb,
When the nation had her grandest work in view.

There were no new-fangled notions in the old-time country school;
And the comforts mighty few we seemed to have
As we conned the ancient primer on a plain four-legged stool,
And ambition knew no richer boon to crave.

In the line of "apparatus" you would think it scant indeed,
Though it served a purpose not so very bad,
If the charts we drew for practice, to supply the pressing need,
Were the only helps to study that we had.

And of sports you term "athletic" it was little then we knew
Of the "nose contused," the "eye out," or the "dislocated arm,"
But with clear six months' vacation, we had blisters not a few
From the "implements of culture" on the farm.

Not the polished high school maiden, with the graces of a queen,
Swayed the sceptre in that venerable hall,
But a tall, lank, awkward fellow, who, perhaps, had never seen
E'en the outside of a college, great or small,—

But he knew his English grammar as but few
could boast of then;
Would rehearse the lines of Homer in his
sleep;
And his hand possessed such cunning, if he
wielded rod or pen,
Made the dullest one among us smile or weep.

In that old-time country schoolhouse, do you
think our loves were small
For the lack of fixtures modernized to taste?
Then you harshly judge the moisture in my
eyes at this recall
Of the visions trooping back from mem'ry's
waste.

THE OLD SATCHEL

How dear to the heart are the scenes of one's boyhood,
When keen recollection recalls them to mind;
The orchard, and hair-breadth escapes through the wildwood,
With good Deacon Pogson pursuing behind.
How, breathless, such times would we end up the frolic
(One blushes to think he has been such a fool),
Each pocket bulged out with concentrated colic,
And crammed in the satchel we carried to school.
The old home-made satchel!
The green-flannel satchel!
The o'er-burdened satchel we carried to school!

That green-flannel satchel we hailed as a treasure;
For out of its depths, from a ball to a sling,
A jew's-harp or knife could be drawn out at pleasure,—
A magnet or fish-hook, a top or a string.
Each toy in his season, like fruits from the tropics,—
Or more like a kit well replete with each tool,—
Promiscuous with grammars and books on all topics,
Were stored in the satchel we carried to school.
The handy old satchel!
The time-honored satchel!
The green-flannel satchel we carried to school!

How roguish we seized it with hands,— soon more glowing,—
And out from its depths some new object displayed
For practice in "barter," just then little knowing
The lynx-eyed instructor was watching the trade.
How soon, all bewildered and mock-absent-minded,
We ogled and flinched while he practiced the rule,
Till, "minus" the gimcrack, "plus" eyes somewhat blinded,
We moistened the satchel we carried to school.
The old home-made satchel!
The precious old satchel!
The tear-sprinkled satchel we carried to school!

Then, surfeited oft with conceptions ideal,
How Hope scoured the future for problems more vast,—
That came with the years; but for joys that are real,
The heart now instinctively turns to the past.
And who, that's a man, will endeavor to stifle
The tear welling up from a heart that is full,
When the eye rests betimes on what seems but a trifle,—
It may be the satchel we carried to school?
The very same satchel!
The now useless satchel!
The old, faded satchel we carried to school!

Thus on,— every day its new lesson containing;
Some time it will seem that this world, after all,
Is only a schoolhouse where souls are in training,—
The young and the aged, the great and the small.
And that which will add to the soul's lasting treasure
In time yet to come will be found, as a rule,
To spring from those acts we look back on with pleasure
When we lay down the satchel we carry to school.
The well-worn old satchel!
The time-faded satchel!
The old, wrinkled satchel we carried to school!

CYNTHY'S GONE TO COLLEGE

Yes, our Cynthy's gone to college, and the
the house is mighty dull,
For a heavy gloom has settled on our thinkin'
since she went,
And the medders seem to languish, and the
flowers she used ter cull
Kind o' hang their heads neglected, and are
chary o' the'r scent.

When we met,— me an' Keziah,— we hed little
at the start
In the line o' worldly lucre, in the way o'
worldly lore,
But with hand in hand united, we were yoked
up heart to heart
With a wealth o' love an' courage, and a
hankerin' fer more.

I hed health an' strength of body and a willin',
strong right arm,
And Keziah,— sech a helpmeet as today ye
couldn't find;
We hed years o' toil an' pleasure as we tuckered
at the farm,
But we gained a leetle surplus, for the Fates
to us were kind.

Sech a wife was thet Keziah! When to plant
an' when ter sow,
When ter prune an' when ter harvest every
fruit an' every yarb
She could tell ye, fer there's nothin' 'bout the
farm she doesn't know;
But our Cynthy's varsed in Latin, an' can
conjugate a varb.

Cynthy,— she was born in springtime, sixteen
year ago last May;
I was herried in the plowin', but I lost my
head with joy,
Fer I ran,— an' left the oxen in the furrer
there to stay,—
In my shirt-sleeves fer the doctor. (I was
lookin' fer a boy.)

She was jest her mother's pictur', and I reckon
we felt rich;
When we heerd her infant prattle we hed lots
o' love to share,
So we nussed her through the measles an' the
whooping cough an' sich,
And we hoped for years o' comfort fer the
many years ef care.

But, ye see, she got disheartened; fer our simple country school
Couldn't teach the 'ics and 'ologys an' 'graphys she must know;
Fer this age is one ev learnin', and ter speak an' think by rule,
You must study with perfessors er you cannot make it go.

So me an' my Keziah,— though, at first, it made us sad,—
Portioned off a little margin we hed saved for rainy days,
For we reckoned thet, as Cynthy was the only gal we had,
We must send her off to college, an' to learn the city ways.

So the home is dull an' silent fer the music o' her song,
And our hearts, like flowers, are droppin' fer the freshnin' of her life;
An' we wrassle through the plowin', and the harvest days seem long,
Till she gits her eddication, and is fitted fer — a wife.

WHEN BETTY MILKS THE COW

When twilight gilds the summer lea
  And daisies close their eyes to sleep,
When hiveward drones the laden bee
  And from the hedge the shadows creep;
The hour when all things sweet combine
  To set their seal on Nature's brow
With tenderest touch,— the hour divine,
    When Betty milks the brindled cow.

The peach's blush upon her cheek;
  The pippin's dimple in her chin;
Her eyes, clear, fountain-like, bespeak
  A depth of purity within;
Softer of voice than yonder dove
  That to its mate is cooing now,—
For all things yield themselves to love
    When Betty milks the brindled cow.

Adown her shoulders, plump and fair
  As ever minstrel rhymed or sung,
A wavy mass of golden hair
  In Nature's artless beauty flung;
Her arms, apoise, of graceful mold,—
  No artist's masterpiece, I trow,
Can match the vision I behold
    When Betty milks the brindled cow.

But whether in her form or face
  Or twinkle in those eyes of blue,
There's some bewitchment in her grace
  That thrills my being through and through;
And what I would I cannot say,
  For silence seals my lips somehow,
And something in my breast gives way
    When Betty milks the brindled cow.

Oh, had I all the miser's store,
  Or wide domain of farm and field,
The fame that falls to men of lore,
  With all the honors earth can yield,
I'd freely barter them for this,—
  Would such a boon the Fates allow,—
Just one sweet promise, one sweet kiss,
    When Betty milks the brindled cow.

THE LAND OF LONG-AGO

As, backward borne by memory's flight,
  We span the hazy mists of years,
Beyond the stretch of mortals' sight,
In fancy's fond encircling light,
  A bright envisioned land appears,—

A land today as fresh as when
  In youth we breathed its balmy air,
Whose flowers and fruits and scenes and men
Are ever just the same as then,
  For seasons make no changes there.

The same fond faces smile betimes
  Upon us from that dreamy past;
We hear at dusk the evening chimes;
And whispers waft to far-off climes
  The same as when we heard them last.

There glossy curls of golden hair
  Have never turned to silver hue;
And cheeks are rosy, plump, and fair,
Unchiseled by the hand of care;
  And deep, soft eyes of azure blue.

Undimmed by age, unscathed by harm,
  Each form its pristine beauty wears;
For by a strange, delusive charm,
Affection keeps those pulses warm
  Throughout the wintry frosts of years.

But who would dash the dream aside
  To put the real in its place,
If other hearts for us still hide
Those changes that, with chastened pride,
  In our own selves we daily trace?

YOUTH'S VISION

To youthful eyes
  The future seems a dream;
Sunshine — fair skies —
  A castle by a stream —

The woods — a bridge —
  And winding paths that lead
To mountain ridge
  Or lowland's flowery mead.

Such visions come!
  Perhaps, indeed, are given,
As gleams of home
  To train the heart for heaven.

WHAT MAKES US OLD

It is not the flight of years
  That makes us old,
But the bother, the blight, and the tears,
  The fret and the scold.

It is not the weight of life
  That bends the back,
But of spirit,— the stress and the strife,
  The yoke and the rack.

It is not the moons we pass
  That blanch the hair,
But the hopes unredeemed, and, alas!
  The false that seemed fair.

It is not Time's fitful art
  That marks the brow,
But the wrinkles that furrow the heart
  Strike outward somehow.

So we sigh for the storied clime
  Of love and truth,
That cancels the years of time
  With unfading youth.

AFTER READING THE CURRENT NOVEL

Oh, we're tired of all this drivel,—
  That "the good must come through pain";
That "the flowers must shrink and shrivel,
  Else they ne'er can bloom again";

That "all joy is born of sorrow";
  That "all hope must cleave its way
Through the dark, despondent morrow
  To the dim and distant day";

That "as roses crushed and pounded
  Yield an attar from the leaf,
So must hearts deceived and wounded,
  Wring a fragrance out of grief";

That "the loss of every treasure
  Frees the soul from deeper thrall,
And we only know of pleasure
  Having tasted of the gall";

That "the stress and strain of groping
  Trains the hand to finer touch,
And the discipline of hoping
  Gives to faith a firmer clutch."

. . . . . .

Why should all that's lovely languish
  Ere its loveliness is seen?
Why ought hearts to writhe in anguish
  Ere they know what joy may mean?

Why must all that life can cherish
  Feel the canker and the curse;
Worth, unsolaced, pine and perish,—
  Sham, triumphant, hold the purse?

Why shall Error, decked and garnished,
  Hold the first and foremost place,
While, 'mid scoffs, Truth,— pure, untarnished,
  Runs the gauntlet of disgrace?

Yes, we're tired of all this drivel!
  Give to goodness right of way!
Let the bad and hateful shrivel!
  That's the doctrine for today.

THE NEW THOUGHT

When Hope recoils, I clear a path
  For mortals where the road is hard;
I reap from failure's aftermath;
  I enter where the gates are barred;

O'er seas unsailed I hold the helm;
  I cleave a passage through the air;
I find the goal of every realm;
  My questing foot is everywhere!

I raise the burden for the faint,
  And press his shoulder to the wheel;
Train him to scorn the weak complaint,
  And bruise distrust beneath his heel!

Who wooes me, finds his boon at length
  Unaided, while, for others' sakes,
He shares the brotherhood of strength,
  And to his helpful self awakes!

PURPOSE

In glades where human feet but seldom roam,
  Betimes some forest mother-bird I've watched,
Within her humble, self-constructed home,
  Patiently sitting till her brood be hatched.

In the frail issue that her patience earned,
  I've marked her forethought, care, instinctive wit,
And from her simple manners have I learned
  More lessons than from volumes men have writ.

How prone, alas! my nature to consult
  My ease, convenience, pride, and self-conceit;
Or quarrel blindly with attained result;
  Let slip the prize, and grasp at mere deceit.

But He who taught the bird in faith to bend
  All her small native gifts her place to fill,
Can mold my powers to gain life's noblest end,
  Through meek surrender to His perfect will.

VIII

PANDORA'S BOX

PANDORA'S BOX

Life comes to some, like her of mythic lore,
  Bedecked with all the charms the gods bestow,
Who yet within her treasure-casket bore
  All human ills,— with only hope below.

And wise is he who early trains his eye
  To quick discernment 'twixt the false and true;
Prometheus-like, to read the hidden lie,
  Nor dally fondly with the outward view.

But wiser he who, being once deceived
  By hidden ill that outward promised fair,
As quickly scans what yet may be retrieved,
  And finds in hope a refuge from despair.

TO MY CAT

WHAT are your musings, kit?
  Tonight you look so strangely wise,
As on my hassock there you sit,
  Blinking at me those owl-like eyes.

The news of yesterday?
  Today's exploits? Why not discuss
Them all with me in friendy way? —
  What are your feline musings, puss?

You've been abroad, I know;
  Perhaps have scaled the garden fence
To visit Neighbor Jones, and so
  Some little gossip may dispense.

Does that investment pay,—
  I mean the one the Joneses made?
(And what, I prithee, did they say
  About my horse-and-carriage trade?)

What news from Alf, or Fred?
  (A letter came by Monday's post.)
And Mary,— will she soon be wed?
  What did her last new bonnet cost?

Think you that Jen was rash
  When, as you toyed with bric-a-brac,
You saw her twitch some one's moustache,
  And shortly after heard a smack?

All this I but surmise;
  You'll tell me if the like be true,
For things withheld from heads more wise
  Are scarce concealed from one like you.

Wilt not such news unveil,
  Purloined from neighbor's friendly chat?
Then, did their baby pull your tail?
  Perhaps you'll mind to speak of that.

"Purr, purr!" and nothing more
  From out that meek, sagacious jaw.
I beg, cajole, conjure, implore;
  She simply motions with her paw.

Well, here's my hand, kit,— come!
  I've had worse cronies in my day!
You've brought no gossip to my home,—
  I'm sure you carried none away.

THE WEATHER-VANE

Type of inconstancy
And fickle mind,
Yet in the storm we see
You face the wind!

THE BOOKWORM

Ha, my bold sir! I'm close upon your track!
  Though fond thy care to carve this cosey nook
  Deep in the pages of my favorite book,
I've traced your tunnel to its cul-de-sac!
Furlongs of lore, drilled through from front to back,
  Spurning alike,— which way thy sap betook,—
  Sermon and song. At tale of knight or spook,
Tyrant or thrall, thy courage showed no lack!
Yet shrinkest thou my presence with alarm,—
  Why now one tittle of thy pride abate?
  Alike we serve one Author, seek one good;
Our fondest toils await one common fate;
Hence not for worlds my hand would do thee harm,
Nor violate my claim to brotherhood.

WASTE'S INCREMENT

A TRAVELER on his weary route,
  An apple ate one sultry day;
And after relishing the fruit,
  He cast the remnant core away.

But from the thing he idly spurned
  And heedless from his hand had thrown,
In after years when he returned,
  Behold,— a seedling tree had grown!

Its branches, spreading wide their shade,
  A wealth of verdant foliage wore;
Among its leaves the zephyrs played;
  And luscious was the fruit it bore!

Thus sometimes, too, the humbler deed,—
  That worthless to man's eye may be,—
Will prove in fertile soil a seed
  Possessed of fruitful potency.

And thoughts that purposeless we fling,
  As trifles waste and small esteemed,
May fall in genial hearts, and bring
  Results of which we had not dreamed.

HIGHER MATHEMATICS

A GRADUATION SQUIB

At school we met and parted
  In mathematic bliss
Ere I,— a youth faint-hearted,—
  Had learned to *add* a kiss.

And when in academic halls,
  Where rules are more exact,
We met,— to train for future calls,
  No hope could I *subtract*.

At college, later, when she took
  The prize for which I tried,
I knew she read in every look
  My fears had *multiplied*.

Thrice overcome, I gasped a vow
  (For love can conquer pride);
And "*veni, vidi, vici*," now,
  We'll never more *divide*.

A most surprising thing is wrought;
  For won and one, you see,
Make only one,—I cypher nought,
  And she has nonplussed me.

A LONG-FELT WANT

QUEER thing of late that science has achieved!
  A dislocated neck, it seems, has been
Reset. (Though this we might have disbelieved,
  Had we not read it in the magazine.)

But there remains one yet more needed task
  To tax the progress of the clinic art:
'Twere well to splice a neck, but who,—we ask,—
  Commands the skill to mend a broken heart?

THE BABBLER

WHAT if his style be far from debonair,
  Why gag his jaw, nor let his lithe tongue
    loose,
Since Rome herself, in time of dire despair,
  Was rescued by the gabble of a goose?

METEMPSYCHOSIS OF THE FIDDLE

In jocund hours or at a country dance
  Your tickled strings have lilted many a reel
That rural swains with nimbler maids might prance
  In rustic rhythm, footing toe and heel.

Only a fiddle, when with *Money-Musk*
  Your rippling quavers timed the tripping feet
On yonder green, or plaintively at dusk
  Some blind man swayed your echoes in the street;

But when that virtuoso's fingers thin
  Have touched the sources of thy minstrelsy,—
Behold art's witchery! A violin
  Now sings and sighs and sobs its sorcery!

FASHION

A FLASH, a swirl, a meteor-light which shows
A form all vaporous that glares and glows;
Who kindles here must quickly touch her fires,
For soon the evanescent flame expires.

THE LAUGH MARKET

"One laugh is worth a thousand sighs,"
  The comic papers tell us,
Of course they mean that this applies
  To laughs from jokes they sell us.

But though the market's full, and more,
  The joke we're sighing after
Is one to make the table roar
  And wring out tears with laughter.

THE ARTIST

The artist has an esoteric eye
  That's fashioned after Nature's formula,
And thus he paints, that others may espy
  The image focused on its retina.

TO A BATTERED TILE

Remnant genteel, and hint of nobler birth,
  Crowning that low, insistent mendicant,
To make thy shabbiness a theme for mirth
  Seems like irreverence in me, I grant!

THE PRESENT AGE

THIS is an age of enterprise and snap,
  The *record-breaker* of the ages gone;
We hold the wisdom,— bottled and on tap,—
  Of former ages all condensed in one.

The *ready-made*, so fitted to our needs,
  Has robbed the thirst for learning of its zest;
On every hand the dead-wall legend reads:
  "You press the button and we do the rest!"

The babe,— no more a suckling,— now *imbibes*
  Some concentrated form of lactic juice
Derived from roots unearthed by savage tribes,
  Distilled or desiccated for its use.

The youth must be provisioned for his nerve;
  The sort best suited, science will explain
In learned treatises, where you'll observe
  "What's craved by muscle famishes the brain."

To match the palate of the full-grown man
  And keep his *sanguinary fluid* good,
The treatment is the late "no-breakfast plan,"
  Or serve with Wellman's Predigested Food."

In spite of all, when diet seems to fail,
  Ten thousand nostrums clamor for respect,
With testimonials long, a healthful tale
  Which, true or false, no patient dare reject.

Our girls derive a grace from every sport
  Their grandmammas eschewed as "ruder games,"
Who spun and wove them robes of every sort,
  And in the dance were deemed "fair, modest dames."

But beauty now is known to be skin-deep,
  And often falsest when it seems most fair;
'Tis advertised, and may be purchased cheap
  From counters in the mart, like other ware.

The age's mood infects the creed as well,
  Invades the pews and in the pulpit lurks;
A milder region takes the place of hell,
  And words are current in the stead of works.

Of what avail the strain of reason's eye
  In furtive stretches forward or behind?
He'll lose the race who stops to question "Why?"
  The prize awaits the man who goes it blind.

Such concentrated stuff we eat and drink
  Begets a race of superhuman kind;
And he's *a pessimist* who dares not think
  This age surpasses all that lie behind!

A CENTENARIAN

He lived *so* long,—but, what beside?
  Life is not gauged by years alone,
But deeds of love, — and that he died
  Was all they carved upon his stone.

IX

LOVE'S CALENDAR

LOVE'S CALENDAR

When Spring had touched the earth anew
We wandered where the cowslips grew,
And hand in hand we climbed the way
Where bloomed the first sweet flowers of May.

In Summer days, in sportive glee
We roamed together by the sea,
And watched the breaking wavelets meet
In rhythmic ripples 'round our feet.

Then, later, in the autumn time
We heard the crickets' rasping chime,
And gazed through vistas in the glade
To note the golden sunsets fade.

But now that winter snows are here,—
The days so short, the nights so drear,—
We trim life's paling lamp at eve,
And closer to each other cleave.

DECLINED

A SONG

Love melts me in devotion, though
  Within thine eyes I read my fate;
Their sweetness lured me on, but oh!
  I seek the shrine too late — too late!

Yet now I make one last request;
  You'll grant it, as we part so soon?
Spare me the rose upon thy breast,—
  Not as a pledge, but as a boon.

Then, as from thee I turn aside,
  And darkness hides the path I take,
That rose, when one shall call thee "bride,"
  I'll cherish for my first love's sake.

And as that flower must fade, alas!
  In fragrance breathe itself away,
So let my life's loved vision pass,—
  A hopeless dream of yesterday!

UNDAUNTED

I know not what mysterious fate
  Hath warped our ways apart,
Nor why for him I watch and wait
  Whose image fills my heart.

But all the while I hold this hope,—
  Where'er may be my place,
Some day for us a door will ope
  And we'll meet face to face.

So let the years be swift or slow,
  I reck not, nor repine;
My hand waits his, and well I know
  His also waits for mine.

By love's unvarying star we steer,
  That dims not here nor there;
And souls that miss their meeting here
  May meet some otherwhere!

THE ROSE OF SKIBBEREEN

The County Cork's a place of fame,—
O'er all the world 'tis known,
And many an honored son can claim
That county for his own.
Where every field was richly drest
In Erin's matchless green,
One flower was there,— of all, the best;
It bloomed in Skibbereen!

Her cheeks bespoke the rose's tint,
Her eyes, the violet's hue;
Her breath, the fragrance of the mint
That round the streamlets grew;
When on her brown, luxuriant hair
The May-day crown was seen,
They named her queen of all the fair,
"The Rose of Skibbereen!"

By wealth and fortune though unblest,
The world of love was mine;
'Twas joy untold, at love's behest
To worship at her shrine.
No day was dull, no night was long,
No cloud our sun could screen;
The hedge-birds twittered in one song,—
"The Rose of Skibbereen!"

Time came,— at Fate's relentless sway,—
  We parted by the stile
With pledges vain to meet some day
  When I had roved a while;
And though cold, wintry winds have swept
  The years that intervene,
Deep down in memory's core is kept
  My Rose of Skibbereen!

TO MY SUMMER GIRL

November by the calendar:
  The world without is drear;
A wild wind makes the casement jar,
  And Winter must be near.

But yet, today one thought of thee
  Sets all the air attune;
Forsooth, November it may be,—
  My heart is yet in June!

TO A BRIDE

BLYTHE be the hour that ushers in thy day,
And fair the flowers that blossom by the way,
Each future morn for thee hope's guerdon bring
And over all, Contentment spread her wing.

THE LASS O' TURFAHUN

(North-of-Ireland)

The bards may sing a sweeter lay
  In praise of beauty's grace,
And swell the part that wealth may play
  For maids of plainer face;
But if to me you'll lend an ear,
  Before my song is done
It's of a country lass you'll hear
  That dwelt in Turfahun.

'Twas in a Ballycastle fair,
  About the Lammas time,
When farming folk throw aff a' care
  And hairst is in its prime;
Amang the lave my heart as yet
  Was only bent on fun,
But Cupid smote me when I met
  The lass o' Turfahun.

For rosy, healthful womankind
  And native wit that's quick,
In Ballycastle fair you'll find
  Of all the world the pick.
'Twas there, in crowds from every airt,
  My eye got fixed on one,
Dismounting from a farmer's cairt
  That came frae Turfahun.

With youthful zeal, though blate an' shy,
  I helped her to alight;
She thanked me, and her glancing eye
  Betokened all was right.
My glance met hers; the vision passed;
  But round my heart was spun
A web of love that bound me fast
  To her of Turfahun.

I sought her later in the dance,
  She yielded me her hand;
And in the mazes of a trance
  We entered Fairyland.
I scarcely knew I touched the floor
  When once the jig begun,
But seemed on music's wings to soar
  With her of Turfahun.

The dance when done, we both sat down,
  I begged her name and place,
And praised the fashion of her gown,
  The fairness of her face.
She gave her sunny curls a toss
  (A cloud o'erswept my sun);
"My name," she said, "is Mrs. Ross;
  I live in Turfahun!"

To meet was sweet, but sad to part;
  'Twas years ago, and yet
The memory of a lost sweetheart
  Is hardest to forget;
And though I'm growing gray of hair,
  Long as life's sands may run
I'll mind that Ballycastle fair,
  And her of Turfahun.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY

Seas intervene, and stars have risen and set,—
Ah me! so many,— since our lips have met;
But when betimes I have strange echoes start
From out the lonely silence of my heart
That thrill me with an ecstasy divine,
I deem it some sweet truant thought of thine.

Nor strange; for if insensate ether holds
Electric pathways in its ambient folds,
Love, surely, too, some vibrant medium knows
To bear its message where its longing goes,
And hearts attune with lips that move afar
Converse by arts nor time nor space can bar.

THE OUL' WHIN BUSH

(North-of-Ireland)

THOUGH life's beset with mony a grief,
  An' ivery heart maun hae its care,
It aft affords nae sma' relief
  Yer sorrows wi' a freen tae share.
For yin 'am fain tae eke my joy
  Wi' thoughts that come wi' memry's rush,
Frae scenes that center in a boy
  An' circle roon an oul' whin bush.

Alang a roddin doon the burn
  Whar grew the seggins green an' rank,
Up owre the nowes an' roon the turn
  That hid frae view the primrose bank,
Here aft a lad would hird his kye,
  An' whistlin' tae the answerin' thrush,
Might watch the simmer clouds float by,
  Ensconced behint "the big whin bush."

That oul' whin bush had stood the brunt
  O' winter's frosts an' simmer's drooth;
Whan aft a seeming sapless runt,
  The breath o' spring brung back its youth.
Beneath its shade the brackens grew,
  An' here the linnet sought her hame;
Owreclad wi' blooms o' saffron hue,
  Like Horeb's bush it seemed aflame.

Then yin I thought would be my ain,
  Sae fair o' form an' sweet o' voice,
I loved fu' deeply, but in vain,—
  Her parents had anither choice.
An' through the haze o' mem'ry's mist
  I catch the freshness o' that blush
On Peggy's cheek whan lover's tryst
  We kept beside the oul' whin bush.

Though many years I felt the stang
  When frae my life its light had gane,
I winna say that they were wrang,
  For he had gear an' I had nane;
But whan the simmer cloud is bright
  An' roon me fa's the evening hush,
My fancy backward takes its flight
  Tae meet her at "the big whin bush."

I've traveled since through many climes
  An' viewed the wealth o' many a state,—
The ruined wrecks o' lordlier times,
  The later castles o' the great;
But biggin's towerin' ower them a'
  Wi' grandeur puts their pride tae blush,—
The castles in the clouds we saw
  Whan coortin' by the oul' whin bush.

In northern lan's the midnight sun
  Has shed his glimmer on my track;
Ower trapic san's I've marched an' run,
  Or jolted on the camel's back;
  But when the stress o' mirth was still,
  Some cheep o' bird or water's flush
Would thrid my thought tae yon green hill,
  The roddin, an' the oul' whin bush.

I've lolled beneath Italian skies;
  Basked in the charms o' sunny France;
Bathed in a sea o' star-lit eyes
  Amid the swirl o' fashion's dance;
But whan my heart, wi' a', has felt
  A something hollow in their gush,
Yin shrine it sought, an' there it knelt
  Tae Peggy at "the big whin bush."

DISTANCE

Desert and sea may loving hearts divide
And yet, between, the distance be not wide,
But ah! that one residing near thy gate,—
How far remote, across the gulf of hate!

THE OLD SPRING WELL

Down at the foot of the lane,
  Near by a turn of the way,
There I met Ellen McShane,
  Sweet as the daisies in May.
I, with the strength of a man,
  Felt my heart swayed by her spell
While she sang,— dipping her can
  Into the old spring well.

But of the song that she sang
  Sorra a word did I hear,
Only the music that rang
  Over the fields far and near;
Yet in my throat there were words,—
  Words that my tongue could not tell,
Trembling on musicless cords,
  Stirred like the old spring well.

Crystal and pure was the spring,
  Purer her maidenly charm;
Richer felt I than a king
  If but her sleeve touched my arm.
"Colleen," said I, "thair am pogue,—
  Pledge me this heartache to quell."
"Bouchill," she said, "you're a rogue,—
  Deep as the old spring well."

Down at the foot of the lane,
  Near by a turn of the road,
There I left Ellen McShane;
  Heavy my heart with its load.
I, for a far distant shore;
  She to be wed to a swell,—
Castle and coaches galore,
  Far from the old spring well.

Now this sweet morning in May,
  Tinged with the verdure of spring,
Brings back the dream of that day,
  While to the old love I cling.
Dreaming, acushla, of thee
  (Dreams may come true,— who can tell?)
Draws my lone heart o'er the sea,
Back to the old spring well.

LOVE'S DILEMMA

You sue my heart as if sincere,
  And pledge a love as wide as space;
You press my hand and whisper, "Dear!"
  And praise the beauty of my face.

But, Sir! I question if your art
  Can solve the problem on my mind,—
How beauty can ensnare one's heart
  If it be true that "Love is blind!"

CAHERSIVEEN

Ah! what makes me lonely?
One secret wish, only,
To cherish in all the fair places I've been,
This heart ever turning
With eyes that are burning,—
To catch one loved look of sweet Cahersiveen.

'Twas when the wild thrushes
Made vocal the bushes,
And thick on the hawthorn the blossoms were seen,
And o'er the hills slanting
No verdure was wanting,
I first saw the light in sweet Cahersiveen.*

How sweet was all duty
When bathed in thy beauty,
That mirth-time of life when the senses were keen;
But sad was that aching
Which set my feet raking,
Far, far from the fields of sweet Cahersiveen!

* *Poetically only* — as it is the bard's privilege to be born anywhere and everywhere.

—J. T.

Through toiling and striving,
Thy virtues found thriving,
And Care slipped his leash at thy sports on the green;
And joy seemed unending
When wrapped in the blending
Of bagpipe and fiddle in Cahersiveen.

Ah, too, in my dreaming
One colleen comes beaming
Who once was enthroned in my heart as its queen;
And oft in my musing,
Through visions confusing,
I join her again in sweet Cahersiveen!

When Fate's lethal potion
Shall quell the heart's motion,—
The faults, long repented, if Mercy will screen,—
One hope, satisfying
Will comfort my dying,—
That heaven may be sweet as was Cahersiveen!

RESURGAM

Love died, and from his grave
  We turned apart in tears!
Each cried, "My heart, be brave;
  This grief will pass with years!

"What matter, if a while,—
  As recollection lives,—
We wear that chastened smile
  Which disappointment gives?"

This happened yesternight;—
  Today I met with her,
And Love,— the artful sprite,—
  Burst from his sepulchre.

X

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

ELIZABETH GALLUP PERKINS

"She nothing touched that did not straightway rise
To nobler stature and to broader view."
—E. G. P. *Obit* 1901.

Bring flowers,— sweet flowers, the wealth of
Nature's store,
The choicely cultured, culled from every
bower;
Enswathe her form, if aught ye can do more
Than lend one charm to grace a lovelier
flower.
Bring flowers,—
Sweet flowers and fragrant;
Lay them here.
None are too sweet or lovely for her bier!

Bring flowers,— bright flowers, the roses white
and red,
To match her thoughts who knew their lan-
guage best;
Weave of rare pinks a chaplet for her head;
Lay the chaste lily on her chaster breast.
Bring flowers,—
Fresh flowers and fragrant;
Bring them now.
None are too pure or lovely for her brow!

Bring flowers,— cut flowers that soon must
droop and fade,
Yet none too soon, since she whose blush they
wore
Falls in her prime beneath Death's fatal blade.
Meet they should wither when she blooms no
more.
Bring flowers,—
Bright flowers,
The brightest that ye have.
None are too good to wither on her grave!

Bring flowers, fair flowers,—an amaranthine
wreath,
Entwined, immortal, by an angel hand,
Of flowers that bloom beyond the gates of
death,
To crown her welcome to the Better Land.
Such flowers *they* bring!
An amaranthine wreath
Of flowers that bloom beyond the gates of
death.

THE HEALING TOUCH

My soul was sad, and for relief
  I came to men and made my moan;
But found not one could sense my grief,—
  They all had troubles of their own!

Blinded with tears I groped, undone,
  Till one soft hand took mine, and then
My eyes, when opened, fell on One
  More marred than all the sons of men!

SAM WALTER FOSS

A TRIBUTE

(*Obit* 1911)

SAD sounds that funeral knell
O'er sea and land!
In deeper tones than words may tell,
Sounding the world's,— and our great loss,—
Sam Walter Foss!

Who has not laughed when he
Some bubble pricked,
And shamed the sham with classic glee?
Who, like him, could put common sense
In verse so tense?

From forest, flower, and field
He gathered toll,—
Nor strained the nectar of their yield,
But, by the magic of his song,
Made truth more strong.

For truth seemed clear to him;
His keen-eyed muse
Explored it to its utmost rim;
This was the touchstone by whose test
He wrought his jest.

And thus we mourn,— alas!
Beside his gold
Our dearest tribute seems but brass;
And yet,— the echoing of his lyre
Uplifts us higher!

GOD'S WAY

We wax impatient for the reign of right;
  We chafe, unrestful, at the King's delay;
With fretful eyes we peer for coming light
  Down the deep vista of a long, dark way.

We are forgetful of the mind that spanned
  Unmeasured eons ere we came to birth,—
His way, unhasting, purposeful, who planned
  And formed the atom ere He formed the earth.

Would we in earnest haste His coming now,
  And fill to full the measure of our part,
We'll find the answer to the when and how
  In facing duty with unswerving heart.

The little space we have,— the little span
  Of feeble years,— though all our powers were given,
Yields too small scope to compass that wide plan
  Which finds completeness in the charts of heaven.

IN MEMORY
OF
SOPHIA P. SNOW

(*Obit* 1900)

THE hand hath rest; the fluttering pulse is still;
The free-born spirit doffs the servient clay;
The harp stands mute, whose latest echoing thrill
Blends with the rapture of an endless lay.

And in our hearts that strain hath holier place,
Who chastened wait the few more throbs of pain;
We hear the song, but miss the minstrel's face,—
We weep, but dare not wish her back again.

FAITH

When, as with timorous steps and fear,
We tread the destined vale of night,
To faith, all dreaded shapes appear
Transfigured in a heavenly light!

TO JOHN B. TABB

I

ON THE BLINDNESS OF THE BELOVED POET

The shadow falls upon a harper's way
  Whose cunning hand has mastered every
    string;
And while intent we wait the broken lay
  Within our hearts a thousand echoes ring.

II

COMPENSATION

ON DEATH OF JOHN B. TABB
(*Obit* 1909)

For us night's rueful gathering shade
  The sunset's radiant picture mars,
Yet gives, for earthly tints that fade,
  Heaven's curtain, jeweled with the stars.

THE BANSHEE

ONCE dreaded, fateful harbinger of Death!
But now an outworn, harmless myth, we're
told;
Yet while we trust what faithless science saith,
Thy message comes as surely as of old!

HE IS DEAD

Yes, he is dead!
  Now bring the floral wreath
To grace his head.
  Alas, he cannot breathe
Its grateful fragrance,— he is dead!

Love dallied long
  To bring its token here,
And rights the wrong
  In passing round his bier
With this last tribute,— he is dead!

Had he but felt,
  Ere death his senses sealed,
How hearts could melt
  What long had been congealed,
Life had been sweeter,— he is dead!

But days are brief,
  And fleet the bustling hours,
Till sudden grief
  Wrings from our hand the flowers
We deck the grave with,— *he* is dead!

A SOLDIER

WITHIN the public park he stands
And grasps a musket in his hands;
Men pass him, heedless, in the street,
And children gambol round his feet.

Cloaked for the storm, and poised at rest;
The cape, flung open, frees his chest;
With back turned toward the setting sun,
Fearless and firm he grips the gun.

Each morning greets his visage grim;
Night throws her mantle over him;
And as he guards 'neath Luna's lamp,
The myriad stars beseem his camp.

Unit of battling brigades,—
This sentinel of four decades,
In stalwart form expresses well
The type of thousands-ten that fell.

Those patriot hearts who stained the field
By him are constantly revealed;
And in his faithful guard is seen
The claim that keeps their memory green.

Long cherished be their sacred dust!
Long may their swords be red — with rust!
While years recall in peaceful bliss
The stress that sent us men like this!

Come, Golden Age! when wars shall cease;
Come, ushering the Prince of Peace!
His prayer, not on our lips alone,
As we salute this man of stone!

SUNSET AND EVENING STAR

A GLORY spreads o'er moor and fen
  That burns to liquid gold the bay,
And Nature seems transfigured when
  Bright Phœbus bars the gates of day.

We watched it fade from hill and hurst,
  But ere night's denser curtain fell,
Within its folds we saw the first
  Lone star peer out as sentinel!

So blessed be the closing years
  Within a world with shadows rife,
If one sweet evening star appears
  To light the firmament of life!

REVERSED

"We're living in a dying world,"
We ofttimes hear it said;
Death's direful dart, unerring hurled,
Lays low the proudest head.

Like ships with canvas all unfurled,
Each sails from sight away;
We're dying in a living world!
More fitly might we say.

SUPPLIANT

When from my face shall fade the flush of youth,
When in my frame shall fail the strength of yore;
When sense is dense where all was once so couth,
And task and toil of life allure no more:

Grant me, dear Lord, at closing of the day,—
Lest I should stumble in the way alone,—
Thy rod and staff, for comfort and for stay,
To guide my faltering footsteps to thy throne.

Vouchsafe to me the inward gladdening glow
Of quickening that awaits the life outworn,
And lift the shadows from the path below
With the rich twilight of eternal morn.

"THE TOUCH OF A VANISHED HAND"

We sigh for the touch of a vanished hand,
  The hand of a friend most dear
Who has passed from our side to the shadowy
    land,—
  But what of the hand that is near?

To the living's touch is the soul inert
  That weeps o'er the silent urn?
For the love that lives is *our* hand alert
  To make some sweet return?

Do we answer back in a fretful tone,
  When life's duties press us sore?
Is our praise as full as if they were gone
  And could hear our praise no more?

As the days go by, are our hands more swift
  For a trifle beyond their share,
Than to grasp, for a kindly, helpful lift,
  The burden some one must bear?

We sigh for the touch of a vanished hand,
  And we think ourselves sincere;
But what of the friends that about us stand,
  And the touch of the hand that's here?

New York City, Oct. 24, 1915.

To those kind readers, who having read these Poems, would like to know something about the Author of them; I would say that my Uncle, John Troland, was born in the Parish of Ballymoney, County Antrim, Ireland, January 15, 1843, a son of Hugh Troland, born June 20, 1800, and a Grand-son of James Troland born in the year 1744, the last mentioned of Leacon, Ballymoney. My Uncle is at present engaged, in his own business of Plumbing & Tinsmith, at Norwich, Ct. U.S.A. and has been so engaged, for the past 42 years.

Very Respectfully

James R. Troland

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